

ABSTRACT for MA research paper

Title: **LIVING DANGEROUSLY**

Subtitle: **HIV/Aids, masculinity and the post-apartheid generation: A case study**

AIM: to investigate via the story of one young South African man the complexity of dealing with HIV/Aids in South Africa.

RATIONALE: With the ending of apartheid and the rise of HIV/Aids, there has been a clear crisis of masculinity in the wake of social change. Government response to the epidemic has been ambiguous. Fana Khaba, aka Yfm DJ Khabzela, was the first young black celebrity to publicly declare he had Aids. I plan to follow his story and to look at HIV/Aids campaigns and to examine why they are not working.

METHODOLOGY: Through a literature review, an examination of statistics and public health messaging on HIV/Aids and my investigation into the life of Fana Khaba, I will show the complexities currently not being considered in the compilation of public health messaging. The reason I chose to follow the story of Fana Khaba is because I am a South African deeply concerned about HIV/Aids. I found his life compelling because it encapsulated so much of the rapid and intense culture shift that followed the arrival of democracy in 1994. And because his life echoed that of a pivotal generation in the apartheid struggle: the generation who grew up in Soweto in the seventies and eighties

and came to adulthood with democracy. The so-called “lost generation” who later became known as the “Y generation”, they are deeply affected by the pandemic. I intend to show that Fana Khaba was a hugely popular iconic figure for the generation because he spoke to their aspirations and their anxieties. I will argue that because his life experience resonated so strongly with this generation, it is reasonable to draw more general lessons from it.

The chief executive officer of Yfm was a friend of mine and, through him, I am able to gain access to Khabzela, his family, friends and colleagues at Yfm. This is an exceptional opportunity to gain an inside view of a life not readily available to relative outsiders such as myself. Clearly there is an ethical issue here. I will at all times keep my interviewees informed about the purpose of my research. I hope to help shed light on this anguished, important and under-debated sphere of life in South Africa..

The format I choose is part investigative journalism, part biography. The reason for this is that I have worked as a journalist for 25 years so all my skills and training point me in that direction. I wanted to make it accessible in order to reach as many people as possible. The narrative-biographical form is conducive to this because it is easy to engage with. In order to give the narrative tension and focus, I shall repeatedly employ the central question of why Fana Khaba refused to take the anti-retrovirals which might have saved his life.

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